



Maryland

**Maryland Department of General Services
Maryland Department of Agriculture**

August 30, 2019

The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass
Health and Government Operations Committee
241 House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chair Pendergrass:

We are writing to inform you that there will be no additional meetings of the Carbon-Intensive Foods Subcommittee of the Maryland Green Purchasing Committee. We appreciate the time and concerted effort Delegate Gilchrist, state agencies and stakeholders put into the subcommittee; however, it has become very clear that these are complicated issues that require solutions beyond the scope of the subcommittee.

The State of Maryland is a national leader on agriculture, climate change, and environmental issues, and already leads a number of initiatives aimed at reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. After much review, we have jointly determined that the goals of this subcommittee are similar to those of other state programs, and have decided that our resources would be better focused on bolstering those efforts.

The Maryland Commission on Climate Change (MCCC) was established by executive order and charged with developing an action plan to address the impacts of climate change in Maryland, including strategies to reduce Maryland's GHG emissions. Out of the MCCC came the Soil Health Act in which the Maryland Department of Agriculture was tasked with the development of a soil health program that improves the health, yield, and profitability of Maryland's soil while increasing carbon sequestration.

Maryland farmers currently lead the Chesapeake Bay watershed in meeting Watershed Implementation Plan goals, which provide the co-benefits of improving water quality and reducing GHG. Practices such as rotational grazing, cover crops, crop and landscape diversity, nutrient management, and alternative marketing contain critical elements of reducing GHG emissions from livestock production.

As discussed in the subcommittee's last meeting, one potential best practice for reducing GHG emissions would be to promote the purchase of local food products. To that end, our respective agencies already work together on the Maryland Food for Maryland Institutions Study Group. This initiative is intended to assess the feasibility of increasing the procurement of locally grown and sourced foods at state

institutions. The Maryland Department of Agriculture is also involved in a number of other programs that promote the growing “Buy Local” movement.

Our administration has made climate change a priority, and we remain committed to addressing this important issue. We look forward to continuing our already established efforts to ensure a healthy planet for many generations of Marylanders to come.

Should you have further questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to Cassie Shirk (cassie.shirk@maryland.gov) at the Maryland Department of Agriculture, or Ellen Roberston (ellen.robertson@maryland.gov) at the Department of General Services.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ellington E. Churchill".

Ellington E. Churchill, Jr.
Secretary, Department of General Services

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph Bartenfelder".

Joseph Bartenfelder
Secretary, Department of Agriculture